



The Rhododendron Garden was established in 1951 by the founding members of the Rhododendron Society on an oak knoll where deer pens had existed for many years. Over time, unusual rhododendron species and hybrids, as well as many other interesting trees and shrubs, have been planted. The garden is a major attraction for local residents as well as visitors from all over the world. The Rhododendron Garden serves as a gateway to the rest of the park.

The Urban Forest covers approximately 60 acres of the park and has remained largely undeveloped save for a few walking trails. This forested portion of the park serves as important wildlife habitat.



The Native Plant Garden was established in 2002 to feature the native plants of the southern Willamette Valley and demonstrate their use in various garden settings. This garden, as well as the Moon Terrace adjoining the F.M. Wilkins Shelter, was made possible by the family of Mary Rear Blakely, noted landscape architect Jin Chen, and many hours of volunteer labor. This garden serves as a living bridge between the Forest and the Rhododendron Garden.

The F.M. Wilkins Shelter, a Works Progress Administration Project, was constructed in 1938 and dedicated to the city and Mr. Wilkins on his 90th birthday. The local newspaper referred to it as "the new picnic lodge." In March of 1999, a fierce windstorm toppled two Douglas-firs, crushing the shelter and destroying everything except the stone fireplace. The shelter was re-built the following year, in the original style. In 2003, the 'Moon Terrace' deck was built adjoining the shelter to serve the growing need for outdoor gatherings.



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